

clinicians practice in both. MFTs also provide services to specialty populations; minority populations make up 25% of their clientele, 25% work in faith-based settings, 17% work in rural settings, and 9% are in elementary or secondary schools. Overall, Family Therapy can be found almost anywhere health care is delivered or practiced.

- ☐ Private Practice
- ☐ Community Mental Health Centers
- ☐ Inpatient Facilities
- ☐ Employee Assistance Programs
- ☐ Health Maintenance Organizations
- ☐ Business and Consulting Companies
- ☐ Schools and Head Start Centers
- ☐ Social Service Agencies
- ☐ Universities and Research Centers
- ☐ Courts and Prisons
- ☐ Rural Clinics

## How do I choose a Family Therapist?

You should telephone and interview potential Family Therapists to find out if they satisfy your needs. Some questions to ask include:

- ☐ **Are they a Clinical Member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT)?** Family Therapists who are Clinical Members of the AAMFT meet the educational, supervision, and training standards of the Association. Licensure standards are based on the AAMFT's Clinical Membership requirements, and the AAMFT accepts licensed MFTs for Clinical Membership in most states. As of 2003, 46 states license MFTs, and for those states without licensure, Clinical Membership will demonstrate equivalent education and training.
- ☐ **What is their educational and training background?** Family Therapists may have a master's or a doctorate degree in marriage and family therapy or an allied discipline such as psychology, medicine/psychiatry, clinical social work, psychiatric nursing, or the ministry. If the professional's degree is not in marriage and family therapy, you should ask about additional post-graduate training they have completed in marriage and family therapy. MFTs also receive two years of clinical experience of which half is with couples and families.

- ☐ **Do they have experience treating the kind of problem you are experiencing; for example, depression, child's behavior, marital stress, intimacy, sexual problems, alcohol or drug abuse?** While MFTs are trained and licensed to provide the full range of mental health services, like all mental health professions, each individual therapist may vary according to expertise. You should inquire as to the therapist's training and experience with the problem you are facing.

- ☐ **Are their services covered by your health insurance?** The majority of managed care organizations and third-party payers reimburse services provided by MFTs. Additionally, most employee assistance programs provided through an employer also contract with Family Therapists. You should contact your plan or payer to ensure they reimburse services provided by MFTs.

- ☐ **What is the average length of marriage and family therapy?** Length of marriage and family therapy depends upon various factors, including seriousness of the problem. Generally, marriage and family therapy tends to be short term.

Research shows that the median length is 12 sessions, with 65% of cases completed within 20 sessions. Though length of therapy differs from case to case, marriage and family therapy tends to be briefer than many other types of therapy.

## How do I find a Family Therapist?

You can find a Family Therapist by searching the free online website [www.TherapistLocator.net](http://www.TherapistLocator.net). All therapists located through this site are Clinical Members of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and have met the AAMFT's rigorous education and training standards. It is recommended that you interview several Family Therapists to ensure compatibility. Often people ask their family physician, clergy, or friends for recommendations.

## What is the AAMFT?

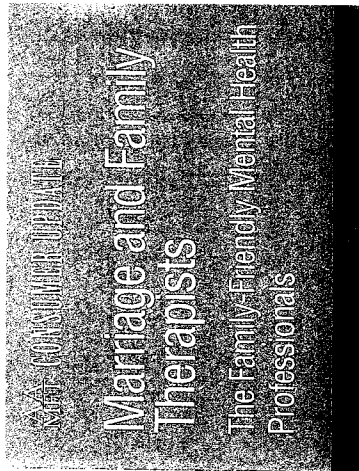
The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) is the professional organization representing more than 23,000 Marriage and Family Therapists in the United States, Canada, and abroad. Since 1942, the AAMFT has increased understanding, research, and education in the field of marriage and family therapy, and ensured that public needs are met by trained MFTs. The AAMFT believes that therapists with specific education and training in marriage and family therapy provide the most effective mental health care to individuals, couples, and families.



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**This brochure is courtesy of:**



**Marriage and family therapy** is based on the research and theory that mental illness and family problems are best treated in a family context. Trained in psychotherapy and family systems, Marriage and Family Therapists (commonly referred to as MFTs or Family Therapists) focus on understanding their clients' symptoms and interaction patterns within their existing environment. MFTs typically treat individuals as well as couples and families. Whomever the client, Family Therapists treat from a relationship perspective that incorporates family systems. Research has shown that family-based interventions are as effective—and in many cases more effective—than alternative interventions, often at a lower cost.

Family therapy for severe mental illness is one of the most well-studied and effective interventions in the mental health literature. Family involvement—including family psychoeducation, multifamily group therapy, and family therapy—have been consistently linked to better individual and family functioning. Research on couples therapy for depression indicates that couples therapy is the treatment of choice for couples in which there is both depression and couple distress. Family therapy outcomes for severe mental illness include improved well-being, fewer medical illnesses, decreased medical care utilization, and increased self-efficacy.

Family-based interventions are also effective for persons with medical problems. Treatment outcomes show improvement in the identified patient, as well as in other family members. Family therapy is particularly

effective with families who are providing care to elders or to a child with a chronic illness (e.g., asthma, diabetes, cystic fibrosis, cancer). There is also some evidence that family involvement facilitates disease prevention, demonstrating improved outcomes for weight reduction for children and cardiovascular risk.

## Who are Family Therapists?

- ☐ Licensed mental health practitioners
- ☐ Educated with a Master's or Doctoral degree
- ☐ Trained with a minimum of two (2) years supervised clinical experience
- ☐ Family-focused psychotherapists and mental health generalists
- ☐ One of the five core mental health professionals (along with psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and psychiatric nurses)

## What services are provided by Family Therapists?

- ☐ Diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders
- ☐ Individual psychotherapy
- ☐ Couple, family, and group psychotherapy
- ☐ Marriage and relationship counseling
- ☐ Premarital education and marital enrichment

## What disorders are commonly treated by Family Therapists?

- ☐ Depression and other Affective Disorders
- ☐ Childhood Behavioral and Emotional Disorders
- ☐ Marital and Relationship Problems
- ☐ Conduct Disorder and Delinquency
- ☐ Substance Abuse
- ☐ Alcoholism
- ☐ Domestic Violence
- ☐ Severe Mental Illness
- ☐ Behavioral Aspects of Physical Illness

## Do clients typically appreciate the services of Family Therapists?

- ☐ 98.1% rated services good or excellent
- ☐ 97.1% got the kind of help they desired
- ☐ 96.9% would recommend their therapist to a friend
- ☐ 94.3% would return to the same therapist in the future
- ☐ 93% said they were helped in dealing more effectively with problems
- ☐ 91.2% were satisfied with the amount of help they received
- ☐ 73.7% indicated improvement in children's behavior
- ☐ 63.4% reported improved physical health
- ☐ 58.7% showed improvement in children's school performance
- ☐ 54.8% reported improvement in functioning at work

## Who are the clients of Family Therapists?

- ☐ 5.8 Million People are seen Annually by Family Therapists (2% of Population)
- ☐ 2,277,031 Individuals Per Year
- ☐ 863,701 Couples Per Year
- ☐ 549,628 Families Per Year
- ☐ 3.7% of Households have seen a MFT

## What distinguishes Family Therapists from other mental health professionals?

A family orientation coupled with rigorous training requirements make Marriage and Family Therapists uniquely qualified to provide mental health services. Family Therapists are trained in various modes of therapy in order to prepare them for work with individuals, families, couples, and groups. The training of MFTs includes live supervision by experienced MFTs, which is unique among the mental health disciplines.

## Do I have to be married to go to a Family Therapist?

No. Individuals often seek marriage and family therapy for help with behavioral problems, relationship issues, or mental and emotional disorders. Family Therapists provide the same services as other mental health professionals, with a different orientation. Family therapy is effective with just one individual or with couples, families or groups.

## What is the cost for a Family Therapist's services?

Mental health services provided by Family Therapists are cost-effective. MFTs provide brief, solution-focused therapy that often results in lower costs to the client.

- ☐ \$60-\$90 per hour average for therapy, depending on payer and setting
- ☐ \$780-\$960 per course of treatment
- ☐ 66% of Private Practice MFTs reduce fees based on an individual's or family's ability to pay
- ☐ Family therapy has been shown to reduce health care use by 21.5%

## What qualifications should I look for in a Family Therapist?

The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) has developed standards for the education and training of Marriage and Family Therapists. The U.S. government and many states have modeled state and federal credentialing requirements on the AAMFT's standards.

AAMFT Clinical Members have a minimum of a master's degree, including specific graduate training in marriage and family therapy. Clinical members also complete at least two years of supervised clinical practice with individuals, couples and families; this includes live supervision of trainees' cases by experienced MFTs.

AAMFT Clinical Members are trained in diagnosis, assessment, and treatment, including a variety of therapeutic techniques and processes. AAMFT Clinical Members observe a strict code of ethics and welcome inquiries about their training, experience, theoretical orientation, and fees.

## What is the difference between a Family Therapist and other mental health professionals?

### Marriage and Family Therapists

- Master's or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy
- Two years of supervised clinical experience

### Clinical Social Workers

- Master's or doctoral degree in social work
- Two years of supervised clinical experience

### Professional Counselors

- Master's degree or higher with a major study in counseling
- Two years of post-master's supervised counseling experience

### Psychiatric Nurse Specialists

- Registered nurses
- Master's degree in nursing with a specialization in psychiatric/mental health care services
- Two years of supervised clinical experience

### Clinical Psychologists

- Doctorate in psychology
- Two years of supervised clinical or counseling experience

### Psychiatrists

- Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) or Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.)
- Certified as a psychiatrist or child psychiatrist by the American Medical Specialists Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, or by the American Osteopathic Board of Neurology and Psychiatry

## Where do Family Therapists practice?

Family Therapists provide services in all segments of the health care arena, with the majority offering direct health care delivery. Half of all Family Therapists work in private practice. One quarter are located in institutional or organizational settings, and the remaining